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DEPARTMENT OF RED CROSS NURSING

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It has been nearly seven years since the first units of nurses were sent aboard on the famous Red Cross Ship and it was not until Miss Noyes went to Europe in September, 1920, that a systematic tour of inspection was made of the nursing service in that country. We are only too familiar with the tragic termination of Miss Delano's trip, which had hardly started when she became ill.

During the active period of the war it was quite impossible to leave National Headquarters for this purpose. Following the war came the terrible epidemic of influenza, and all the problems of readjustment that were necessary in order to bring the nursing service of the Red Cross into line with peace activities. There were three significant reasons which prompted this tour: (1) To make a general inspection of Red Cross nursing activities in order to determine the character of the work now being performed by Red Cross nurses; (2) To study the schools of nursing which have already been established, with the coöperation of the American Red Cross in various countries heretofore without a modern system of nursing, also to consider requests for assistance with schools for other countries; (3) To study the nursing aspect of the proposed health units.

In order to make the study effective, for Red Cross nurses are scattered widely throughout Europe, it was necessary to visit France, Czecho-Slovakia, Poland, Austria, Serbia, Bulgaria, Turkey, Greece, Albania, Montenegro, Dalmatia and Italy. Accompanied by Helen Scott Hay, Chief Nurse to the European Commission, Miss Noyes left Paris October 4, 1920.

It was a hard journey, complicated by such difficulties in travel as lack of heat and food, slow trains because of lack of fuel, taking two days to complete a journey that under proper conditions should necessitate but one; spending nights in cold sleeping cars or arriving at destinations in the middle of the night or in early morning hours, uncertain as to whether hotel accommodations could be found or not. Hotel accommodations were frequently poor, rooms were unheated and food inadequate. Wherever the Red Cross was operating a Red Cross personnel house, however, satisfactory accommodations and good food were inevitable. It was necessary to carry at all times a well stocked food basket and facilities for making coffee en route.

"Miss Hay was an expert at making coffee and foraging for food," says Miss Noyes. "Thanksgiving Day found us en route to Saloniki with a cold fowl and a Red Cross man added to our stock, with which we regaled ourselves."

Through Albania and Montenegro, both rugged, mountainous countries, the only means of transportation was a faithful Ford camionette, varied with an occasional Fiat lorry. In speaking of her travels through this territory Miss Noyes says:

There is nothing more stimulating and exciting than to start out in the early morning on the front seat of a lorry, swinging over the snowy mountain tops, down the mountain roads, wondering whether the first turn will mean a drop over a precipice a thousand feet or so. The Montenegrin chauffeur, however, is as familiar with his mountain roads and hairpin turns, and finds it perhaps quite as easy to bring a car skilfully over the mountains, as a New York chauffeur would find it bringing one down Fifth Avenue. There is one point, however, on the famous road called the "Ladder," leading down to Cattaro on the Dalmatian Coast, where native chauffeurs delight to show you the remains, at the bottom of the precipice, of numerous automobiles that with their passengers, have met an untimely fate through the inexperienced chauffeurs who have attempted the trip.

On the home stretch from Rome, Italy, to Paris, traveling, in comparison to that which had preceded, seemed the height of luxury, for there were well heated cars, comfortable wagon-lits, dining cars with shaded lamps, and plenty of good hot food. Every mode of conveyance, even to crossing streams on the backs of mountaineers, was pressed into service, but Miss Hay felt that my trip was not quite complete because I did not take a side trip in an ox cart. The nearest I came to this was having the Ford pulled out of a swollen stream by a yoke of oxen.

The first institution visited by Miss Noyes and Miss Hay was the School of Nursing at Prague, Czecho-Slovakia. This school had been opened for about six months, with Marion Parsons as the Director, assisted by Miss Lentel, Pansy Besom, a public health nurse, who is developing the three months' course in Public Health Nursing for the pupils of the school; and Miss Kacena, an American-Bohemian nurse who fortunately spoke the language very well. She, with Miss Parsons, has had the course in Training School Administration at Teachers College. Miss Kacena is developing the practical field in the hospital while Miss Lentel gives the theoretical instruction. This school, the first of its kind in Czecho-Slovakia is being mothered by Dr. Alice Mazaryk, who is President of the Czecho-Slovakian Red Cross, and also a member of the Training School Committee, which includes the Minister of Hygiene, the Hospital Superintendent, and several other important men and women.

Gradually Miss Parsons has been able to educate this committee in training school organization until they have acquired some knowledge of the requirements, not only as far as the candidate is concerned,

but also for the development of a suitable teaching field. It is not so difficult in a country such as this to develop the facilities for teaching the theory of nursing, but it is quite a different matter when it comes to the hospital ward as a field of practical nursing,—for the inadequate equipment, lack of proper tea kitchens and lavatories, the inadequate food, linen, and other supplies, make it a very difficult matter, especially for an American nurse who has been accustomed to well-equipped hospitals to adjust herself and her standards to such primitive surroundings and get results.

I was at first greatly discouraged, the possibility of ever teaching practical nursing under such unfavorable conditions seemed remote. Then, I thought of Bellevue in its first days, and the wonderful group of pioneers developed there, Miss Dock, Miss Hampton, Miss Delano and many others, I began to feel that this experience might be repeated in another country, and that the nurses who were going to these wards under the direction of a capable American nurse, who were receiving the best class room instruction, might also develop into pioneers and might become to Czecho-Slovakia what these nurses from Bellevue became to America.

While in Czecho-Slovakia Miss Noyes saw many things besides the training schools. She found that the city of Prague had been divided into thirteen districts, in each of which was a health center. A fairly typical one consisted of a day nursery, kindergartens, a milk station, children's clinic and sometimes others. These were invariably in good condition and were doing admirable work. No plan, however, had been developed for following the child back to its home. It was this phase of the work which interested Miss Besom, and which she felt was most important to foster. The condition of the patients in the military hospitals and in the large general hospitals was particularly pathetic. Rarely did they have more than one blanket, even the tuberculosis patients, the food supply was most inadequate and the clothing for patients was noticeably insufficient. Two small pieces of soap for all purposes were allowed each ward, per week, in one institution. The explanation made was that while hospital authorities were fully conscious of these deficiencies, the supplies were not to be had; they were not in the country and there was not sufficient money to buy them elsewhere, owing to the depreciation of the currency. Retreating armies had not hesitated to enter hospitals, stripping the blankets from the beds of the sick and the aged in homes and almshouses; and while the situation was being gradually adjusted, progress was slow. The American Red Cross had contributed some supplies to the Czecho-Slovakian Red Cross for distribution and these had been of great assistance.

Czecho-Slovakia is a wonderful country, however, rich in its agricultural resources, while its 15,000,000 geese furnish, not only

food but feathers, and are a source of wealth to the peasants. Wherever one goes flocks of geese can be seen feeding in the fields guarded either by a child or an old person. The lonely figure of the little goose girls or the little goose boy, standing for hours in the fields at this service, usually with bare feet regardless of cold and wet, is a familiar scene upon the landscape. One of the questions that always arises in one's mind is whether they ever go to school and what sort of a person is developed from a child who has been kept at this work for so long a period.

TWENTY-ONE RED CROSS NURSES RETURN FROM THE BALKANS

The present program of the Red Cross Nursing Service in Europe is directed toward Child Welfare work and the organization of Schools of Nursing. Consequently there has been a slight reduction of personnel in the past two months, and twenty-one nurses have been recalled to this country, as follows:

The total number of nurses now remaining in Europe under the auspices of the American Red Cross is 90, and there are 28 nurses with the Near East Commission. The nurses under the Serbia Relief Commission, not under the Red Cross, number 4, and there are 4 nurses with the League of Red Cross Societies. The present program of the Red Cross Nursing Service in Europe is directed toward Child Welfare work and the organization of schools of nursing. Consequently there has been a slight reduction of personnel in the past two months, and twenty-one nurses have been recalled to this country, as follows: from Montenegro, Adelaide R. Poole; from Constantinople, Turkey, Alice E. Sutton; from Athens, Greece, Kathleen D'Olier; from Ruthenia, Czecho-Slovakia, Margaret A. Norwich; and from Poland, Mary E. Ayres, Bertha B. Beyer, Helen D. Boylston, Minnie Fassbender, Regna Frederickson, Praxeda Fronczak, Marion Garberino, Leonora Gilley, Mrs. Hazel F. Kingsley, Ethel MacKenzie, Katherine Neumann, Anna C. Raven, Esther M. Rose, Mattie M. Thompson, Bertha Thulon, Katherine Van Buskirke, and Doris Wartosky.

RED CROSS DIVISIONS REDUCED

The number of Divisions of the Red Cross has been reduced from thirteen to seven, the territory allotted to each of the seven being so arranged that the entire area of the country is covered. The Division names to be retained are: New England, Atlantic, Lake, Southern, Central, Southwestern, Pacific.